

The Popes and Labor

The Catholic Mind

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Company Union?

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The decision in the Lille case is of interest to students of the social question everywhere, for the Sacred Congregation of the Council took occasion from the controversy to quote extensively from the classic sources of Catholic social teaching, chiefly from the letters of Leo XIII and other recent Popes. The full text of the decision, with preface and comment, is offered to readers in this issue.

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The Lille Case

REV. LEWIS WATT, S.J.

The following brief note explains the circumstances which elicited the letter of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, an English version of which is presented in full in this issue.

Father Watt's preface and the English text of the letter were published in pamphlet form by the Catholic Social Guild, Oxford, England.

AN unfortunate dispute between employers and workers in the North of France in 1924 led the former to appeal to Rome against the Christian Trade Unions, who were in conflict with them. The question at issue was sufficiently grave to justify a very careful investigation of the whole matter, and this investigation was undertaken by one of the committees of Cardinals appointed by the Holy Father to assist him in his gigantic task of administering the affairs of the Catholic Church. In 1928 this committee (the Congregation of the Council, as it is officially termed) gave its decision, and requested the ecclesiastical authorities of the diocese of Lille to communicate its judgment to the parties concerned. This was duly done, but it did not prevent further industrial disputes between the same parties. Therefore, in order that the fullest publicity should be given to the Roman decision, it was published last August (1929) in the official journal of the Holy See (*Acta Apostolicæ Sedis*). It is a translation of this document that the reader will find in the following pages.

BREADTH OF APPLICATION

If the terms of the judgment concerned only the employers and workers of the North of France, it is doubtful whether the Catholic Social Guild would have undertaken the task of putting it before the British public. But in fact the Roman Congregation has expressed itself in terms so wide as to make an important official contribution to Catholic sociology. Seven leading principles relating to asso-

ciations of employers and workers are enunciated, and confirmed by quotations from letters of recent Popes; then, in the light of these principles, a decision is given on the case presented to Rome by the French employers.

In brief, the principles amount to this: that the Catholic Church strongly favors the formation of trade unions and employers' associations, and desires the establishment of joint industrial committees to conduct negotiations between them in the interests of social welfare. She does not overlook the danger that the policy of a union or association may not be in harmony with Christian social principles. To meet this danger, she desires that in countries where conditions make it possible there should be Catholic organizations for Catholic employers and workers, while fully recognizing that such conditions do not prevail everywhere. In some countries trade unionism has, to a large extent, become revolutionary or communist in tone, with an anti-religious bias (e. g., in France). This has made it impossible for Catholics to join existing unions without violating their religious and social convictions, and in consequence they have been driven to form distinctively Catholic unions, whose loyal cooperation in the general labor movement has been recently commended by the Director of the International Labor Office, M. Albert Thomas. Elsewhere (e. g., in Great Britain) this problem has fortunately not arisen, and Catholics have been and are able to join the existing undenominational unions, to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Passing now to that part of the Roman judgment which deals with the application of these principles to France, the British reader should not fail to notice the emphasis laid on the need for education in social principles, a work which the Catholic Social Guild exists to promote. The advice to establish a permanent joint industrial committee will appeal to every thoughtful student, and will recall the recommendations of our own Whitley Committee. Priests who have interested themselves in social questions, notwithstanding the many other calls upon their time and energies, will be encouraged when they see what importance the Congregation of the Council, in accordance with previous Papal instructions, attaches to this department of sacerdotal activity.

EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Attention must be drawn to one point which might be overlooked in a cursory reading of the document we are discussing. The Congregation reminds the employers that each of them has an individual responsibility for the resolutions adopted by their association, a responsibility which obliges them to withstand any attack on the rights of the workers and any infraction of morality. In Great Britain, where Catholic employers and workers belong to non-Catholic associations and trade unions, this moral principle has as much relevance as in France. The individual must be held responsible for the acts of the group to which he belongs, unless he expressly protests against them and does what lies in his power to prevent them. The precise nature of his protest and resistance against violations of the moral law must be decided in each case according to circumstances, but in no case can passive acquiescence be right. One cannot discharge the obligations of one's own conscience on to the shoulders of a committee or even of a majority in an association. This is as true for employers and workers as it is for shareholders. There is no space here to discuss methods of organizing healthy moral opinion within a group, but the timely reminder given by the Congregation should stimulate all Catholics to take an active interest in the industrial organizations to which they belong.

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations

A LETTER OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF THE COUNCIL
TO MSGR. LIÉNART, BISHOP OF LILLE, FRANCE

Translated by Virginia Crawford

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND MOST REV. MONSIGNOR,

THIS Sacred Congregation of the Council, having duly received the appeal of M. Eugène Mathon, in the name of the Federation of Employers of the Roubaix-Tourcoing district, and having been petitioned to pronounce judgment concerning the conflict that has arisen between the said Federation and the Christian Workers' Unions of the same district, has arrived, after a close and prolonged examination of this grave and delicate question, at the following conclusions, which it hereby communicates to Your Lordship in the hope that, having been conveyed to the parties concerned, they will remove controversy and effect the concentration of all the forces of religion and social order.

Above all, the Sacred Congregation considers the moment opportune for recalling that no question can arise concerning the competency of the Church in this matter, under the pretext that it is one of purely economic interest. Leo XIII proclaimed this competency when, in the Encyclical, "Rerum Novarum," with reference to the relations of employers and employed, he declared: "We approach the subject with confidence, and in the exercise of rights which fully appertain to Us." So also, Pius X wrote in the Encyclical, "Singulari Quadam" (September 24, 1912): "The social question and the controversies connected with it regarding the nature and duration of work, the fixing of wages, and strikes, are not purely economic or capable of solution without reference to the authority of the Church."

It is therefore useful and even necessary to recall to both parties the chief points of Catholic social doctrine, and of the practical instructions (in the moral order) of the supreme Authority in the Church, with reference to the organization and activity of Christian Trade Associations.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—In translating certain passages from Papal encyclicals, recourse has been had, with kind permission of the Catholic Truth Society, to "The Pope and the People."

I

The Church recognizes and affirms the right of employers and workers to form industrial associations, whether separately or together, and sees in them an efficacious means towards the solution of the social question.

"Employers and workmen can themselves effect much in the matter we are treating, by all the institutions suitable for the relief of indigence and for drawing the two classes more closely together. . . . The most important of all are working-men's unions, which comprise almost all these institutions. . . . Such unions should be suited to the requirements of this our age—an age of wider education, of different habits, and of far more numerous requirements in daily life. It is gratifying to know that there are actually in existence not a few associations of this nature, consisting either of workmen alone, or of workmen and employers together; but it were greatly to be desired that they should become more numerous and more efficient" (Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum," May 15, 1891).

"When there is question of forming associations, care must be taken not to fall into error. And here We wish to speak specially of the workers, who certainly have the right to unite in associations for the promotion of their interests: to this the Church agrees and nature is not opposed" (Leo XIII, "Longinqua Oceani," January 6, 1895).

II

The Church, under existing circumstances, considers the formation of these industrial associations morally necessary.

"Associations of every kind, and especially those of working-men, are now far more common than heretofore. As regards many of these there is no need at present to inquire whence they spring, what are their objects, or what the means they employ. There is a good deal of evidence, however, which goes to prove that many of these societies are in the hands of secret leaders, and are managed on principles ill-accommodating with Christianity and the public well-being; and that they do their utmost to get within their grasp the whole field of labor, and force working-men either to join them or starve. Under such circumstances Christian working-men must do one of two things: either join asso-

ciations in which their religion will be exposed to peril, or form associations among themselves—unite their forces and shake off courageously the yoke of so unrighteous and intolerable an oppression. No one who does not wish to expose man's chief good to extreme risk will for a moment hesitate to say that the second alternative should by all means be adopted" ("Rerum Novarum").

III

The Church urges the formation of industrial associations.

"In the first place we urge the formation among Catholics of these societies which are developing in all directions in order to safeguard their interests in the social sphere. For such societies are well adapted to our day: they provide facilities for their members to consult together both for the defense of their interests and for the protection of their faith and morals" (Pius X, to the Archbishops and Bishops of Brazil, January 6, 1911).

The same Pontiff exhorted Count Medolago Albani in the following terms in a letter of March 19, 1904:

"Continue then, as in the past, to promote and direct, not only institutions of a purely economic character, but also others of a similar nature, i. e., professional unions for employers and employed, which promote a good understanding between them, as well as popular bureaus which give both legal and technical advice. . . . In these directions you will not lack the warmest encouragements."

And to the directors of the Italian Economic Union he wrote: "What institutions ought you preferably to promote within the sphere of your Union? Your never-failing charity will be the best judge. But for Ourselves, industrial associations appear to Us the most opportune."

Benedict XV wrote to Canon Mury, of Autun, through the Cardinal Secretary of State (May 7, 1919), that "he desires to see encouraged the growth of definitely professional unions, so that there may be found throughout French territory really powerful unions inspired with a Christian spirit and embracing in wide organizations workers of both sexes in fraternal unity. He is well aware that in offering these encouragements he is serving the deepest interests, not only of the working classes, but also of social peace, of which he is the supreme guardian, as well as those

of the noble French nation which lies so close to his heart."

On December 31, 1922, the present Pontiff, Pius XI, instructed the Cardinal Secretary of State to write as follows to M. Zirnheld, President of the French Confederation of Christian Workers:

"It is with the greatest pleasure that the Holy Father has learned of the progress of this federation which aims at the betterment of the working classes by the application of the principles of the Gospel, in the spirit in which the Church has always applied them to the solution of social problems.

"The Holy Father expresses the ardent hope that the Catholic members of your Confederation will always be fervent in maintaining their faith and piety by the frequent practice of their religious duties, through which they will acquire, not only the means of personal sanctification, but the zeal and devotion needful in their industrial organizations."

IV

It is the desire of the Church that industrial organizations should be founded and conducted in accordance with the principles of Christian faith and morals.

"We may lay it down as a general and lasting law, that working-men's associations should be so organized and governed as to furnish the best and most suitable means for attaining what is aimed at, that is to say, for helping each individual member to better his condition to the utmost in body, mind and property. But it is clear that they should first and foremost aim at their principal object, viz., religious and moral perfection, and that their administration should be in harmony with this object; otherwise they would wholly lose their special character, and end by becoming little better than those societies which take no account whatever of religion" (Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum").

"That is the reason why We have never encouraged Catholics to form associations to better the lot of the working class, or introduce other schemes of the kind, without at the same time warning them that such institutions ought to have religion as their source of inspiration, companion and support" (Leo XIII, "Graves de Communi," January 18, 1901).

"In none of his actions, even in the sphere of temporal

concerns, has the Christian the right to leave supernatural interests out of account: nay more, the precepts of Christianity oblige him to direct everything he does to the Sovereign Good, as his last end" (Pius X, "Singulari Quadam," September 24, 1912).

V

It is the desire of the Church that industrial organizations should be instruments of peace and concord, and with this object in view she suggests the institution of joint committees as a bond of union between them.

"Those who glory in the title *Christian*, whether individuals or groups, must not, if aware of their duties, foster enmity and opposition between social classes, but rather peace and mutual friendship" (Pius X, "Singulari Quadam").

"Catholic writers, when they defend the cause of the poor and the proletariat, should be careful not to employ language that may inspire in the people a hatred for the upper classes of society. . . . They must remember that Jesus Christ desired to unite all men in the bonds of reciprocal love, which is the perfection of justice, and which entails the obligation of mutual labor for mutual good" (Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, January 27, 1902).

"Those who preside over this class of institution, the aim of which is to promote the welfare of the worker, must remember that nothing is more certain to bring about the general good than concord and harmony between all classes, and that Christian charity is its best cement. Those, therefore, would do an ill service to the worker who, on the pretense of improving his conditions of life, would help him merely to acquire the fragile and transitory goods of this world, and would neglect to dispose his mind to charity by recalling to him his Christian duties: nay more, would even excite still further his animosity against the rich by giving vent to those bitter and violent declamations by which men, not of our Faith, are in the habit of inciting the masses to revolutionary action" (Benedict XV to the Bishop of Bergamo, March 11, 1920).

"The rights and duties of the employers, as compared with the rights and duties of the employed, ought to be the

subject of careful consideration. Should it happen that either a master or a workman believes himself injured, nothing would be more desirable than that a committee should be appointed composed of reliable and capable members of the association whose duty it would be, conformably with the rules of the association, to settle the dispute" (Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum").

"Catholic associations should not only avoid, but also combat class war as being essentially opposed to Christian principles. . . . It is most opportune, useful and in conformity with Christian principles, to continue, as far as may be practicable, the simultaneous establishment of separate unions for employers and for workers, while creating, as a point of contact between them, joint committees entrusted with the duty of discussing and settling in a peaceful manner, in accordance with justice and charity, the disagreements that may spring up between the members of the respective unions" (Letter of Cardinal Gasparri to the *Union Economique Sociale*, February 25, 1915).

VI

It is the desire of the Church that industrial associations organized by Catholics for Catholics, should be constituted among Catholics, while recognizing that special circumstances may necessitate another course.

"Catholics should preferably associate with other Catholics, unless necessity compels them to act differently. That is a very important point for the safeguarding of the Faith" (Leo XIII to the Bishops of the United States, January 6, 1895).

"Now with reference to working-men's societies, although their object is to secure temporal advantages for their members, those are to be regarded as worthy of the highest approval, and as the best fitted to promote the real and solid utility of their members, which are founded chiefly on the basis of the Catholic religion and openly follow the leadership of the Church. This We have Ourselves several times declared for different nations, as occasion offered. Hence it follows that such Catholic associations should be established and favored in every way, certainly in Catholic countries, and in all other places where it appears that through them provision can be made for the various needs of their members" (Pius X, "Singulari Quadam").

VII

The Church recommends the union of all Catholics for combined work in the bonds of Christian charity.

"Brave hearts and united forces are imperatively demanded by the situation. Widespread indeed are the miseries that we see, and formidable too the impending danger of fatal disturbances, due to the ever-growing forces of socialism" (Leo XIII, "Graves de Communi").

"Every minister of holy religion must bring to the struggle the full energy of his mind and all his power of endurance. Moved by your authority, Venerable Brethren, and quickened by your example, they should never cease to urge upon men of every class, upon the high-placed as well as the lowly, the Gospel doctrines of Christian life; by every means in their power they must strive to secure the good of the people; and above all must earnestly cherish in themselves, and try to arouse in others, charity, the mistress and queen of virtues. For the happy results we all long for must be chiefly brought about by the plenteous outpouring of charity, of that true Christian charity which is the fulfilling of the whole Gospel law, which is always ready to sacrifice itself for others' sake, and is man's surest antidote against worldly pride and immoderate love of self; that charity whose office is described and whose God-like features are outlined by the Apostle St. Paul in these words: 'Charity is patient, is kind . . . seeketh not her own . . . suffereth all things . . . endureth all things'" (Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum").

APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES

In the light of these principles and directions, the way is clear for arriving at an equitable judgment in the matter before us.

In the first place, as regards trade unions, it is impossible to deny to Christian workers the right to constitute their own unions, distinct from those of the employers, although not antagonistic to them. This is specially true when, as in the present case, these unions have been desired and encouraged by the competent ecclesiastical authority, in accordance with the rules of Catholic social teaching, the observance of which is obligatory on the members, accord-

ing to their rules, and in their various union activities, for which they must seek inspiration more especially in the Encyclical "*Rerum Novarum*."

Moreover, it is obvious that the constitution of such unions, distinct from those of the employers, is not incompatible with social peace, as, on the one hand, they repudiate on principle the class war, together with collectivism in all its forms, and on the other, they admit the use of collective contracts in order to establish peaceful relations between capital and labor.

And industrial employers must not regard these unions as an act of mistrust, especially under present circumstances, when the need is obvious for promoting and encouraging, in opposition to socialist and communist trade unionism, unions in which the Christian workers can discuss their legitimate economic and temporal interests without any danger to their spiritual and eternal welfare.

On this point there does not appear to exist any divergence between the two associations engaged in the present dispute. Indeed, M. Mathon, in his second Report, declares that the Federation of Employers' Associations "ardently desires the formation of truly Christian unions, defending the interests of the workers, comparing these interests with those of the employers, discussing freely and independently with the employers' organizations, who equally with the unions have the duty to study all matters under dispute in a spirit of justice and equity and without prejudice to the sentiments of Christian charity which should animate them all."

The dispute arises from the fact that the Federation [of Employers' Associations] considers that up till now the so-called Christian unions have not been truly Christian; in other words, it considers that, in the exercise of their activities, they have not been thoroughly faithful to the principles of Christian social teaching, and, in support of this assertion, the Federation brings a number of allegations.

While accepting the intentions and the good faith of the petitioners, it is easy to see the gravity of the accusation. Hence the Sacred Congregation, before pronouncing judgment, made a number of careful inquiries; it collected, from the most authoritative sources, wholly reliable information in order to form a correct appreciation of the justice of so serious a charge.

This having been done, the Sacred Congregation feels bound to declare that in accordance with incontestable documents and the proofs it has collected, certain of the allegations made are exaggerated, while others, the most grave, attributing a Marxist and State Socialist spirit to the trade unions, are unjust and wholly devoid of foundation.

Nevertheless the Sacred Congregation does not deny that the Christian unions may have been guilty of some tactical errors and that certain of their members may have made use of expressions in public not wholly in conformity with Catholic doctrine.

PROMOTION OF SOCIAL STUDY AGENCIES

For this reason the Congregation expresses the wish that the directors [of the unions] should be exhorted to provide more effectively for the Christian social education of all their members, by making use of the various methods which, to their credit, are already in existence: secretariates, industrial "weeks," study circles, propaganda meetings, and spiritual retreats, in order that their union activities may be impregnated with a Christian spirit of charity, justice and moderation. And on this subject, in view of a more thorough Christian social formation, and one more adapted to youth, the Sacred Congregation suggests that, in the various clubs for young men and boys and educational institutes, some social education suitable to the capacities of young people should be given (as is already done with excellent results in certain dioceses); the result of such instruction will be not only to protect the young from the errors to which they are exposed but also to make them realize the beneficent activity of the Church in the social sphere.

Moreover, special care should be taken that all, particularly the leaders of the unions, should possess an adequate practical knowledge of technical, professional and economic questions.

As regards the constitution, in exceptional cases, of what has been termed a *cartel intersyndical*, or inter-union alliance, between Christian unions and non-religious or even socialist unions for the defense of their legitimate interests, it must always be remembered that such an alliance is only permissible when made in certain special cases, when the cause to be defended is a just one, when it is a question of

merely temporary cooperation and when all precautions have been taken to avoid the perils that such cooperation may entail.

To sum up: the Sacred Congregation views with satisfaction the founding of trade unions that are truly Catholic in spirit and in action, and expresses the wish that they may grow in number and in quality, so that, by their means, the good results hoped for by Pope Leo XIII may be achieved, viz., the provision of a refuge for those workmen who are members of anti-Christian unions and who feel the need and the duty of freeing themselves from bonds which enslave the conscience for purely economic interests.

"To [workmen] such as these, Catholic associations are of incalculable service, by helping them out of their difficulties, inviting them to companionship and receiving the returning wanderers to a haven where they may securely find repose" (Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum").

BENEFICENCE NOT ENOUGH

Turning now to matters that directly concern the members of the Federation, the Sacred Congregation has noted with keen pleasure all that the Federation has done for the relief of the suffering of the workers, as well as the splendid and beneficent work that they have already organized, especially through the development of family allowances, a work of the highest charity as well as of social justice. Nevertheless, in speaking to Catholics, the Sacred Congregation cannot refrain from inviting them to reflect that in the relations between employers and employed, in order to retain peace and concord, it is not sufficient to appeal to "professional solidarity," and to multiply beneficent works inspired by a purely human philanthropy. True concord and true peace can only be won by the adhesion of all to the luminous principles of Christian morality.

Further, the Sacred Congregation congratulates the employers on having felt and understood the need of constituting themselves into an organization in order to arrive more effectively at social peace.

Nevertheless, the Congregation is not able to refrain from noting that although individually the directors of the Federation make open profession of Catholicism, in point of fact they have formed their association on an undenomi-

national basis. In this connection it is well to recall what Leo XIII wrote: "Catholics ought, by preference, to form associations with Catholics, unless necessity forces them to act otherwise. This is a very important point for the safeguarding of their faith" (Leo XIII, "Longinqua Oceani," January 6, 1895).

EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

If for the moment it is not possible to form Catholic unions for employers, the Sacred Congregation nevertheless considers it necessary to call the attention of Catholic manufacturers, especially those who are members of the Christian Association of Employers in the North, to their personal responsibility for the resolutions that may be adopted, in order that these may conform to the laws of Catholic morality and that the religious and moral interests of the workers may be guaranteed, or at least not injured. They must take particular care to ensure, as regards their inter-federation commission, that every consideration, demanded by equity, should be given to the Christian unions so as to assure them conditions of labor if not better than, at least as favorable as, those of other organizations which are frankly irreligious and revolutionary.

COOPERATION OF CLASSES

Having made the above observations concerning the two kinds of union, the Sacred Congregation desires that all mistrust should disappear and all differences cease, and that just and peaceable relations in accordance with Christian principles should be maintained henceforth between the two unions. Let the members of each remember their own great social responsibilities as Catholics, for both the associations should set an example of that collaboration of classes demanded by the morality they profess.

Bearing in mind that the Federation has declared itself ready to discuss all likely causes of disagreement, with full liberty and mutual independence, in the light of the principles of equity and justice, the Sacred Congregation would see with satisfaction the setting-up of a regular method of communication between the two associations by means of a permanent joint committee. Such a committee would have

for its aim to discuss mutual interests at periodical meetings in order that the associations should no longer be organs of conflict and antagonism, but rather, in harmony with the Christian conception, means of mutual comprehension, of friendly discussion and of peace.

MISSIONARIES OF LABOR

The Sacred Congregation cannot refrain from praising the Right Reverend Bishops of the Northern district for having confided to zealous and competent priests the duty of assisting the directors and members of the associations in spiritual matters as well as in questions involving the principles of morality; and it expresses the wish that in other industrial districts the Bishops should nominate priests to be "Missionaries of Labor," as they are called, whose apostolate, besides protecting the people against the evil of religious indifference and the socialist and communist peril, would also be a witness to the maternal solicitude with which the Church embraces the workers.

Benedict XV showed to what extent such a scheme is not only opportune but necessary, when he declared, in his letter already quoted to the Bishop of Bergamo:

"Let no member of the clergy imagine that such activity is outside his priestly ministry on the grounds that it lies in the economic sphere; for it is precisely in that sphere that the salvation of souls is in peril. Hence it is Our desire that priests regard it as one of their obligations to devote themselves as far as possible to social theory and action by study, observation and work, and to support in all ways those who, in this sphere, exercise a wholesome influence for the good of Catholics."

In conclusion, the Sacred Congregation invites both parties, employers and employed, to rise to thoughts and feelings of a higher order. The remarkable progress of socialism and communism, and the loss of faith among the working classes, are undeniable facts that give rise to serious thought. Taking advantage of the real sufferings of the workers, socialism and communism have succeeded in making them believe that these doctrines alone are capable of promoting effectively their industrial, political and social interests, and have established trade unions for them. Thus it has become urgent for all Catholics to unite their forces

in opposition to so great an evil, which draws so many souls on to the road of eternal perdition, and saps the bases of social order, thus preparing the ruin of nations and of States.

Let then all discord be put aside; so that, with mutual concord, reciprocal confidence and above all with great charity, institutions may be established which draw their inspiration from Catholic principles and assure to the workers, together with their economic interests, the liberty to declare themselves Christians and the power to fulfil all their duties as such.

I beg your Lordship, when carrying out the decisions contained in this letter, to make use of the most efficacious means that your tact and prudence may suggest, in order to attain more easily the end that the Sacred Congregation has had in view for the greater good of all. I shall be grateful if your Lordship will inform us of everything that takes place.

(signed)

D. CARDINAL SBARRETTI,

Bishop of Sabina.

June 5, 1929.

Has Rome Approved the Company Union?

REV. PAUL L. BLAKELY, S.J.

Reprinted from "America," October 5, 1929

THE recent decision of the Sacred Congregation of the Council in the case presented from the diocese of Lille has attracted considerable notice. This stir is probably due to the fact that for the first time in their lives some Catholics in this country have been brought face to face with the teachings of the Catholic Church on the relations of capital and labor. For there is nothing new in the decree. The principles on which it is based are simply those of the Encyclicals of Leo XIII which, in turn, are common to all apologists who have written in the spirit of the Church. If for no other reason then, the decree is to be welcomed for the attention it has directed to certain basic principles of Catholic social action.

It has been said, however, that the Sacred Congregation appears to give a sanction to the so-called "company union" which Catholics in general, and this Review in particular, have never been disposed to grant. It blesses, we are told, what this Review has roundly condemned. Hence we are asked to reach for the sackcloth and ashes, and to sit on the ground, weeping out our heart in sorrow for the blows and stripes inflicted in the past upon this alleged union.

We find it quite impossible to do anything of the kind. As long as the company union remains the source of discord, hypocrisy, and rank injustice which we believe it to be, we shall endeavor to have a scourge of knotted cords at hand. For only a complete misapprehension of the text and purpose of the Sacred Congregation can find in this decree an approval of the company union.

Fundamental in the Encyclical "On the Condition of the Working Classes" and in the philosophy of capital and labor, are two principles: first, the rights of all must be religiously respected; and second, all dealings between man and man, and especially between employer and employe, must be based not upon justice alone, but also upon charity.

Every man has an undoubted right to acquire, increase, and hold property. He has the right to take measures for a reasonable return upon his investments. He has the right to enter into a contract with his fellows to secure their labor. He has the right to enter into compacts with other owners and employers, and to form societies for the protection and promotion of rights held in common. It is supposed, of course, that in exercising and extending these rights, he will use no unjust or uncharitable means. But his rights, whatever they be and wherever exercised, must be religiously respected.

But the owner and employer cannot have it both ways.

The right of employes to organize freely for mutual protection must also be religiously respected. Leo XIII always spoke in strong and moving terms whenever he wrote of the worker and of the poor (and Catholic apologists have followed his example) for the simple reason that the worker and the poor are less protected than the rich, and their rights, in consequence, are more exposed to outrage. We have read many moving accounts of the sleepless nights of the wealthy, turning on their beds, like a door on a hinge; but we have never been able to shed any tears for

the sad plight of rich men who could rid themselves of their plight by turning over their wealth to religion and charity, receiving in return, a decent sustenance. Like our Lord, Catholics generally side with the poor. If in a particular case they err, they willingly accept correction, and no great harm is done.

But to the scandal of many in his day, Leo XIII bluntly observed that the rights of the worker were the more frequently put in peril. So far, indeed, had his rights been flouted that often his condition differed little from slavery. And when the Pontiff wrote that it was shameful and inhuman to treat a being made to the image and likeness of God, a creature whose dignity the almighty Creator Himself respected, as though he were a machine for the making of money, or so much muscle or physical power, he was not referring to outrages vaguely possible, but to outrages scandalously rampant.

Well do we Americans know, as we review the history of labor in the mines and the mills, that these conditions, scarcely distinguishable from slavery, long outlasted the day of Leo XIII. If all other means failed to end these abuses, wrote the Pontiff, then the State was bound to intervene, both to protect human rights and to remove evils which tended to destroy society. But more than this: the State would not err if, departing from the strict letter of justice, it regarded the poor and the worker with a benevolent eye. The scales were not to be weighted, save only as charity might incline them in favor of the most needy, and least protected, members of society. "The poor and the helpless," wrote Leo XIII, "have a special claim to consideration. . . . Those who are badly off have no resources of their own to fall back on, and must chiefly depend upon the assistance of the State. And it is for this reason that wage-earners, who are undoubtedly among the weak and the necessitous, should be specially cared for and protected by the Government."

It should be further remarked that labor's right to organize does not cease at the moment in which existing injustices are removed. This appears to have been one of the issues in the Lille case, where the owners and employers, themselves organized, held that "from the moment labor benefits from indisputable material advantages, it no longer has the right to organize" (N. C. W. C. dispatch).

The weakness of this contention is obvious. Once "respect for rights" is secured, organization may be trebly necessary to guarantee maintenance of this respect. In any case, the right to organize by just means for a just purpose is, as Leo teaches, a natural right which not even the State may destroy.

Catholic philosophy does not acquiesce, however, in the contention that the normal relations of capital and labor should be those of nations at war. That view the Pontiff condemned as "irrational and false." Interpreting the mind of the Church, Leo taught that the workers and (by necessary inference) the employers were within their rights in organizing, but he did not desire them to organize for war. As I have pointed out, the fundamental principles in his social program were justice and charity; yet even apart from this fact, the encyclical itself makes abundantly plain that the Pontiff wished the two organizations to meet and confer for the promotion of their mutual welfare. Conflicts arise, almost necessarily, even between well-intentioned organizations. In that case, the differences were to be adjusted by *authorized representatives* on the basis of justice and charity.

I have ventured into italics. Repeatedly, Leo XIII speaks of rights "full and real," of "agreements," of "free consent," as bearing upon the relations of worker and employer. It may therefore be taken for granted that when he treats of labor unions, he does not mean organizations which the workers are *forced* to join, under threat of dismissal, or as a condition of employment. He means a free union, not a group controlled by the employer; not, in brief, the company union, with its yellow-dog "contract." That organization is not a free union. It is not a union at all, but a species of violence, and it outrages and betrays the worker when it professes to represent him in dealing with the employer.

Hence the conciliatory methods (recommended years ago by Leo XIII, but only now coming into the ken of the public) are bound to fail, when the employer is represented by his own freely chosen organization, and the employee is represented by the organization which the employer has chosen for him. It should not be necessary to argue that Leo XIII had no such group in mind, and that the Sacred Congregation in its recent decree had none, when incul-

cating the advantages of adjusting labor disputes by conference and arbitration.

But granted the free union, Leo XIII would have it act whenever possible as an agent of conciliation. "The rights and duties of the employers, as compared with the rights and duties of the employed," he teaches, when treating of the duties of the labor union, "ought to be the subject of careful consideration." Then follows a most pertinent passage. "Should it happen that either a master or a workman believes himself injured, nothing would be more desirable than that a committee should be appointed, composed of reliable and capable members of the association, whose duty would be, conformably with the rules of the association, to settle the dispute." What is here recommended is certainly not the company union. On the contrary, the Pontiff desires a board of adjustment or conciliation on which the workers shall be represented by those members of their union whom they themselves freely choose.

It was here, as far as an alien observer can see, that the owners' associations failed at Lille. Although organized, as were the unions, on a basis which fully recognized Catholic principles of social action, the owners unwisely refused to deal with the Catholic groups, yet agreed to deal with certain Socialist unions. It is true that Leo XIII did not in formal language so impose boards of arbitration upon Catholic owners, that a refusal would be tantamount to a violation of a precept. But it is plain that he desired the formation of such boards, and it is also plain that, commonly, industrial war is the only alternative.

As the heat of conflict cools, the Catholic employers in Lille will doubtless recognize their error. We trust that the same course will be followed by all who see in the decision of the Sacred Congregation of the Council an approval of the company union, or even the slightest recession from the principles so eloquently preached by Leo XIII.

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